

DECOYS: Place the spinning-wing devices facing wind

FROM PAGE 21

before coming into range. Instead, force doves to focus their attention elsewhere. Always place spinning-wing decoys facing into the wind like landing birds, but off to one side where they present the best shots at the optimum range.

"When I go hunting, the first thing I do is scout around looking for birds," advised Mike Morgan, a dove hunter. "I watch to see if they are flying in any particular way or direction and put a spinning decoy where I want to shoot birds. I'm left-handed so I shoot better on a right-to-left shot. I'll put a spinning-wing decoy at a 45-degree angle about 20 to 25 yards to my left so the birds must fly right in front of me to get to that decoy."

Motion decoys can make doves look in a particular direction from great distances, but sportsmen may need additional enticement to complete the deception. Small birds like doves typically feed on bare ground where they can easily find seeds. Set a few static dove decoys on the ground around a spinner to simulate feeding doves. Place a few more in strategic positions, such as along a fencerow, low brush or tree line like sentries watching for predators. Many static



Wayne Pope uses a fishing rod to place decoys high on non-working wire simulating powerlines.

decoys come with devices so they can clip onto branches or fence wires.

Some sportsmen use another trick to fool birds. Doves frequently perch on high powerlines or branches to rest after feeding. These high perches give them great vantage points to watch for predators. Some hunters use fishing rods to place dove decoys on non-working high wires, but **NEVER ATTEMPT THIS WITH LIVE WIRES!**

Cast a dove decoy over a non-working wire and reel it up so that it looks like a dove perching on a powerline,

something birds commonly expect to see. People can also use this technique to place decoys on open tree branch-

es. Sportsmen could put multiple decoys on branches or wires.

After feeding, doves generally go to water, which helps them digest the seeds they swallowed. Watering holes make great places to set up a few decoys for a midday or afternoon hunt. A watering hole could mean a pond or even a puddle in a gravel road. Doves seldom go directly to the water. Instead, they normally perch in a tree, wire or on a fence to look around for danger before dropping to the ground. Hunters could clip some decoys on low branches or fence wires.

Sportsmen could try these tricks to fool more birds this fall. Good decoying techniques might bring these swift, erratic and difficult to hit fliers in closer and slow them down enough for some successful shooting.

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